



# THE SENATE SPOTLIGHT

Volume 2, Issue 4

*Georgia State Senate*

April 2006

## *Senate adjourns Sine Die*

### *2006 Session goes down to the wire*



It's a wrap! The Georgia General Assembly has successfully completed another legislative session, as the gavel came down to close the 2006 session near midnight on March 30.

This year, the Senate worked until the final seconds of the 40<sup>th</sup> day. In the last hours of the '06 session, the Senate adopted important agreements on the FY 07 budget, new eminent domain policy, the creation of new municipalities in Fulton County and other important bills. As much of the public focus now shifts to the upcoming November elections, let's take a

look at some of the things we will remember most from this session...

### *Best Wishes*

The Senate extends a fond farewell to departing State Senators Casey Cagle, Bill Stephens, Brian Kemp, Steen Miles and Sam Zamarripa. Former Majority Leader Stephens will run for Secretary of State. Finance Chairman Cagle and Sen. Miles plan to run for Lieutenant Governor. Public Safety Chairman Kemp is running for Agriculture Commissioner. Sen. Zamarripa aims to further develop trade relations between the State of Georgia and China. We wish these departing Senators the best of luck in all their future endeavors.



### *All Hail the Dean*

On the last day of the 2006 session, long-time public servant Sen. Terrell Starr announced that he will not seek re-election in 2006. After more than 35 years of public service, Sen. Starr has decided to spend more time with his family. He has been a fixture in the state Senate, continuously representing Clayton County since 1968. We also wish him the best!

### *Goodbye Dear Friend*

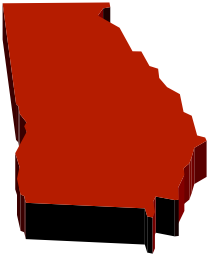
The State Senate suffered a terrible loss upon the passing of longtime Secretary of the Senate Frank Eldridge, Jr. Secretary Eldridge devoted a lifetime of service to the people of Georgia, serving as the Senate's administrative officer and unofficial parliamentarian for nearly 14 legislative sessions and as a state Senator for nearly 20 years. Needless to say, he will be sorely missed.



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## *Hot-Button Issues*

Several key issues came to the forefront of debate in 2006. Legislation focusing on illegal immigration, eminent domain, voter ID, sexual predators, child support payments, paper voting records and more came before the General Assembly this year. The 2006 session will surely be remembered for the important bills that moved through the process to become law.

## *2006 Atlanta Motor Speedway Day*

The Capitol community enjoyed the annual Atlanta Motor Speedway Day event on March 16, 2006. This year's NASCAR Day was highlighted by visits from O. Bruton Smith, Chairman and CEO of Speedway Motorsports, and professional drivers Jeff Burton, Reed Sorenson, John Andretti, Bill Lester and David Ragan.



## *Ewing Elected Secretary*

The Senate elected Bob Ewing to succeed Frank Eldridge as Secretary of the Senate. Ewing most recently served as Assistant Secretary of the Senate. Over the years, Bob has garnered the respect and admiration of legislators and staff, making him an obvious choice for the Secretary's office. He attributes much of his success to the mentoring of former Secretaries Eldridge and Hamilton McWhorter.

## *Spotlight on... Senators Douglas and Tarver visit Augusta-area VA facilities*

*Senators pay respect to those who have served*



Chairman of the Senate Veterans and Military Affairs Committee John Douglas and Senator Ed Tarver took time out of the busy 2006 session to visit injured veterans and troops. The Senators flew to the U.S. Army Southeast Regional Medical Command and Eisenhower Army Medical Center at Fort Gordon in Augusta. Upon arrival, they met with several injured soldiers, Georgia troops returning from Iraq and veterans of other wars being treated at the facility. The Senators also toured the treatment facilities and met with Regional Medical Commander BG Donald M. Bradshaw. The visit highlights the Senate's efforts to acknowledge and honor the brave men and women who serve in our nation's military forces.

## *Employee Spotlight on... John Barbour*

### **What is your current job and/or assignments?**

I am the Senate Journal Clerk, and I've worked for the General Assembly since 2003. My main responsibility is to compile, manage and update the Senate Journal, which is the official historical document of the State Senate. My work involves two major functions: using the Legislative Management System (LMS) to populate a database that tracks all legislation coming through the Senate, while simultaneously creating the Journal document containing all Senate votes, motions, amendments, substitutes and actions on legislation. Subsequently, the data stored in the LMS database is used to produce all of the different tools that the Senate and the general public use daily. These tools include the composite status, the daily status, the Senate first readers and bill status information on the General Assembly website.



### **How did you end up at the General Assembly?**

I was just out of college and I was working as a waiter. Deputy Secretary of the Senate Jeffrey Foley was a regular patron, and he invited me to be an intern during the 2003 session. During that session, I had the privilege of being the "Senate runner" and working directly under current Secretary Bob Ewing on the floor. It wasn't long after the session that I was offered a full-time position by former Secretary Frank Eldridge. I consider it an honor to work for the Senate, and I appreciate the opportunity to work with so many talented individuals.

### **Tell me a little about your background. Birthplace, brothers and sisters, etc.**

I was born in Fayetteville, NC. My grandfather was a lieutenant colonel in the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division out of Fort Bragg. My father is an executive for John Deere, which kept us on the move while I was a child. At age six, my family moved to the Atlanta area. I graduated from Shiloh High School, and I earned a BA in sociology from Georgia State University in 2001. I have an older brother named Jason, two nieces (Summer and Sterling) and a nephew (Spencer). In 2004, I married my beautiful wife Holly, and we reside in the historic Kirkwood neighborhood here in Atlanta.

### **Tell us some of your fondest memories of working with the General Assembly.**

Probably the fondest memory I have of working with the Senate occurred during this year's session. When Secretary Eldridge passed, the entire Senate came together and made it through a terrible time. The outpouring of support our office received from senators, representatives, family, friends and the general public was so important to us. Also, everyone in the Secretary's office stepped up and took on extra responsibility to help us make it through this difficult time.

### **Tell us about your hobbies and/or what you enjoy doing away from work...**

Music is a passion of mine, and I enjoy playing guitar whenever I can find the time. I am also a huge sports fan. I especially like basketball, tennis and ultimate Frisbee. Recently, my team finished second in the Workingman's Dodge Ball Championship, which was held at Oglethorpe University. Also, my wife and I have three cats and a puppy named Dakota. We really enjoy going to the park with Dakota as much as possible. We are also in the process of learning the fine art of home improvement.

### **The General Assembly can be an exciting place to work. What are some of the aspects of your position that you enjoy the most?**

Session is my favorite time of the year, because I have a front-row seat for all of the affairs of the Senate. I sit directly to the right of the Lt. Governor in the Senate Chamber, ensuring my full attention each time the gavel drops. I also enjoy compiling and writing the Journal because it is such a challenge. To me, working on the Senate Journal is like piecing together an enormous puzzle that is crucial to the daily functions of not only the State Senate, but also for lobbyists and the public as well.

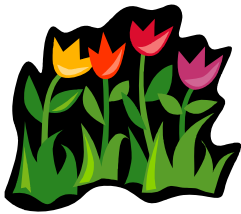
## *Senate Budget's Spotlight on... Monthly numbers*



The revenue collected by the Department of Revenue for March 2006 (FY 06) was \$1,200,704,000. This is an increase of 6.5 percent when compared to the revenue collected in March 2005 (FY 05), which was \$1,127,440,000.

The percentage increase year-to-date for Fiscal Year 2006 (FY 06) is 9.6 percent when compared to Fiscal Year 2005 (FY 05).

## *Senate Spotlight on . . . April Birthdays*



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY** to . . .



**Senator Vincent Fort**

**Senator Johnny Grant**

**Senator Emanuel Jones**

**Senator David Shafer**

**Senator Ross Tolleson**

**Jill Travis**- Legislative Counsel

**Lisha Thompson**- Office Manager, Senate Research

**Althea Alonto**- Legislative Assistant

**Rita Smith**- Legislative Assistant, Pro Tem's Office

*April 28<sup>th</sup>*

*April 25<sup>th</sup>*

*April 1<sup>st</sup>*

*April 29<sup>th</sup>*

*April 26<sup>th</sup>*

*April 23<sup>rd</sup>*

*April 10<sup>th</sup>*

*April 21<sup>st</sup>*

*April 26<sup>th</sup>*

*It's official... Our name has changed! We are now the Senate Press Office. Please make a note to avoid any potential confusion.*



### *Happy Easter!*

The Senate Press Office would like to wish all Senators and Senate staff a very Happy Easter! We hope you and your family enjoy this year's holiday to the fullest.

*The Senate Spotlight is a product of the Senate Press Office. If you have a suggestion, a person you would like to nominate for the*

*Employee Spotlight or would like to contribute a Senate-related article, please contact us at 404.656.0028.*